

CORPS' PONDENT

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of Engineers
Portland District

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Corps of Engineers Photo

Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp hands the Corps colors to Col. Steven Miles during the change of command ceremony Nov. 2. Miles replaces Brig. Gen. Gregg Martin, left, as Northwestern Division Commander as Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Winzenreid looks on.



As 2008 comes to a close, I am struck by the number of Soldiers, Civilians, Sailors, Airmen and Marines serving their country far from home. Whether they are stationed in Germany, Korea, or Iraq, many of them are defending freedom far from friends and family. Having been a Soldier for 25 years, my family and I know first-hand how important contact with friends and family can be during the holidays – and as we prepare for my deployment to Afghanistan in summer, this season takes on a special meaning.

The holiday season is important to many faiths and communities, so it's not surprising to find that Soldiers feel the same way. There are many examples of enemy soldiers halting hostilities to share a fire or a few moments of peace. During World War I, the French and British soldiers actually shared a Christmas truce with German soldiers on Christmas Eve in Belgium in 1914. I'd like to share the story with you because I believe it exemplifies the human spirit, and gives hope that those in conflict may be able to find peace year-round. The story is told by an unknown British soldier, who was writing a letter back home to his loved ones. It was, in his own words, "the most memorable Christmas I've ever spent."

"This will be the most memorable Christmas I've ever spent or likely to spend: since about tea time yesterday I don't think there's been a shot fired on either side up to now. Last night turned a very clear frost moonlight night, so soon after dusk we had some decent fires going and had a few carols and songs. The Germans commenced by placing lights all along the edge of their trenches and coming over to us — wishing us a Happy Christmas, etc. They also gave us a few songs, etc. so we had quite a social party. Several of them can speak English very well so we had a few conversations. Some of our chaps went over to their lines. I think they've all come back bar one from 'E' Co. They no doubt kept him as a souvenir. In spite of our fires, etc. it was terribly cold and a job to sleep between look out duties, which are two hours in every six.

First thing this morning it was very foggy. So we stood to arms a little longer than usual.



Col. Thomas O'Donovan

A few of us that were lucky could go to Holy Communion early this morning. It was celebrated in a ruined farm about 500 yds behind us. I unfortunately couldn't go. There must be something in the spirit of Christmas as today we are all on top of our trenches running about. Whereas other days we have to keep our heads well down. We had breakfast about 8.0 which went down alright especially some cocoa we made. We also had some of the post this morning. I had a parcel

from B. G's Lace Dept containing a sweater, smokes, under clothes, etc. We also had a card from the Queen, which I am sending back to you to look after please. After breakfast we had a game of football at the back of our trenches! We've had a few Germans over to see us this morning. They also sent a party over to bury a sniper we shot in the week. He was about a 100 yds from our trench. A few of our fellows went out and helped to bury him.

About 10.30 we had a short church parade the morning service etc. held in the trench. How we did sing. 'O come all ye faithful. And 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night' were the

This December issue includes photos of Soldiers deployed at Christmas, from World War I through Iraq and Afghanistan. Public Affairs wishes you a happy holiday season.

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hymns we had. At present we are cooking our Christmas Dinner! so will finish this letter later.

Dinner is over! and well we enjoyed it. Our dinner party started off with fried bacon and dip-bread: followed by hot Xmas Pudding. I had a mascot in my piece. Next item on the menu was muscatels and almonds, oranges, bananas, chocolate, etc. followed by cocoa and smokes. You can guess we thought of the dinners at home. Just before dinner I had the pleasure of shaking hands with several Germans: a party of them came 1/2way over to us so several of us went out to them. I exchanged one of my balaclavas for a hat. I've also got a button off one of their tunics. We also exchanged smokes, etc. and had a decent chat. They say they won't fire tomorrow if we don't so I suppose we shall get a bit of a holiday — perhaps. After exchanging autographs and them wishing us a Happy New Year we departed and came back and had our dinner.

We can hardly believe that we've been firing at them for the last week or two — it all seems so strange....”

During this holiday season, please remember those who are serving the nation, whether in Oregon or halfway around the world. Send a note to your deployed colleagues, to let them know you are thinking of them. As you enjoy whatever traditions you hold dear, have a safe and happy holiday season. 🏠 **Essayons!**



A cross, left near Ieper in Belgium in 1999, to celebrate the site of the Christmas Truce during the First World War in 1914. The text reads: 1914 - The Khaki Chum's Christmas Truce - 1999 - 85 Years - Lest We Forget. Wikipedia public domain photo.

Happy Holidays



Cooks of Company C, 8th Field Signal Battalion preparing their Christmas dinner at Mullernbach, Germany. Dec. 25, 1918.



President Wilson receiving Christmas tokens from French boys after having inspected billets of 26th Division. Sarrey, Hte. Marne, France. Dec. 25, 1918.



Bundles from America for soldiers in the field with Field Artillery Unit in Germany. Nov 26, 1944

U.S. Army Photos



Corps launches natural resources foundation

By Cori Brown, Baltimore District

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

As any good manager will tell you, you need the right tools to get the job done. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Natural Resources Management Community of Practice just added another tool to their toolbox that will significantly enhance their partnership capabilities. The tool is called the Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (CNREF).

LTG Robert Van Antwerp, Chief of Engineers, and Peter B. Lewis, President, Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (CNREF) Board of Directors, signed a Memorandum of Understanding marking the beginning of this landmark partnership during the Environmental and Natural Resources Conference in San Antonio, Texas, Oct. 30.

CNREF breaks new ground as the only national non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to stewardship of environmental, cultural, educational and outdoor recreational resources associated with the Corps' national Natural Resources Management mission. The foundation will bring potential partners together with the Corps to support approved but unfunded natural resources projects. The foundation's specific goals include assisting local and regional Corps advocacy groups in raising funds for enhancement projects and facilitating partnerships between the public and private sectors and the Corps.


Once the foundation receives information from Corps projects, it will determine whether there are activities that meet its supporting criteria of emphasizing long-term community engagement with the Corps, volunteerism, education and interpretive services and environmental stewardship. Activities the foundation decides to support must have the necessary environmental clearances, planning documentation and partners already engaged or identified.

CNREF will also support the Corps through individual and corporate memberships open to everyone, including current Corps employees

and Corps alumni. Through CNREF, Corps officials envision benefits to project sites that include improvements to hiking trails, development of interpretive brochures, campground rehabilitations, development of teacher education materials, habitat restoration and protection of cultural sites. The foundation will also promote the Corps' recreation values of providing high quality, family oriented recreational opportunities close to home, healthy lifestyle, and conservation and sustainment of natural resources for future generations.



Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp and CNREF president Peter Lewis sign a memorandum of understanding outlining the partnership between the Corps and the foundation Oct. 30, 2007.

"The Corps is extremely proud to enter into this innovative partnership with CNREF," said Mary Coulombe, Chief of Natural Resources Management. This foundation will allow the Corps to work on many different environmental and recreation projects, improving visitor experiences and environmental conditions. Our financial and human resources are limited, visitor demands are increasing, and our facilities are aging. This partnership will be vital to provide additional support for the Corps Natural Resources Management mission, and facilitate additional partnerships between the public and private sector." 



U.S. Navy Senior Chief Yeoman Shawn Newcoste, hands Christmas gifts to junior enlisted U.S. service members assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, Dec. 10, 2006. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Eric A. Clement) (Released)



U.S. Army Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Infantry Division deliver Christmas dinner to fellow Soldiers. Provincial Control Center in the Khowst province of Afghanistan, Dec. 25, 2006. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Isaac A. Graham) (Released)



Chaplain Captain Warren "Chappy" Watties, delivers Christmas trees to the U.S. Forces compound, outside Manas International Airport, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.



Alex Briggs, daughter of U.S. Air Force Capt. Matt Briggs of the 37th Airlift Squadron, tells Santa what she wants for Christmas, Dec. 12, 2004. Ramstein Air Base, Germany. (USAF Photo by Airman 1st Class Steve Czyz) (Released)



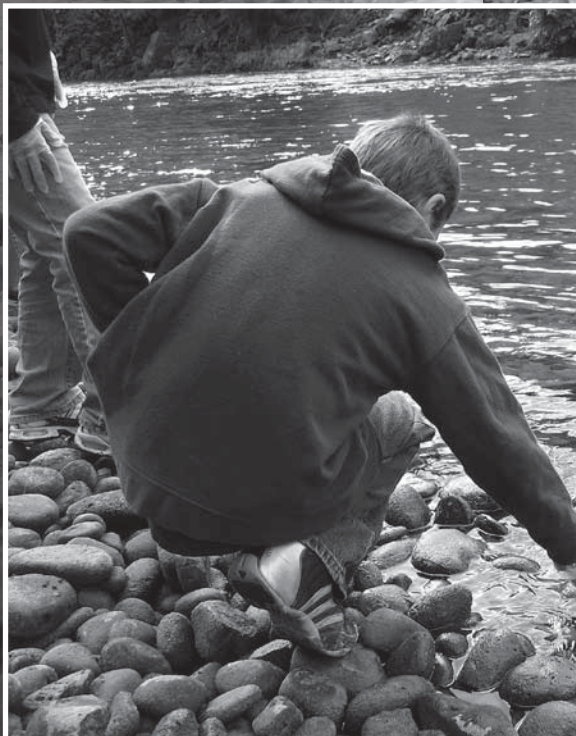
U.S. Navy Engineman 3rd Class Kwamie Corridon helps a Japanese child make a Christmas tree ornament. Koyoryo Children's Home in Sasebo, Japan, Dec. 17, 2006. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Adam R. Cole) (Released)

U.S. Army Photos



Salmon Watch at

Between Oct. 1 and Nov. 9, the Portland District hosted more than 240 students for Salmon Watch, a program sponsored by Oregon Trout at McGregor Park on Lost Creek Lake. Students from middle schools throughout the Rogue River Basin learned about the health of the watershed, riparian ecology and how humans interact with the environment. The Corps, the U.S. Forest Service, BLM, Oregon Fish and Wildlife and local volunteers presented information at five locations in McGregor Park. Edward Amerson, Rogue River Basin Project park manager, talked about the salmon life cycle. Students learned about riparian studies, water quality analysis and macro-invertebrates (like stoneflies), in addition to the salmon life cycle.



t Lost Creek Lake



Corps of Engineers Photos: Stonefly photo: Fritz Geller-Grimm, reprinted by permission



Oversized vacuum project cleans toxic sediment from Columbia River

By Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

PROJECT NEWS

Back in the day, Corps employees and their families lived at Bonneville Lock and Dam project. Through the 1950s, there was a school and homes located on the project. There was a pistol range where guards could keep their aim sharp and a landfill on the east end of Bradford Island to collect the project's household and industrial waste, including electrical equipment and light bulbs.

The landfill closed more than 25 years ago; now trucks haul the waste to landfills miles away. Although it is out of sight of the Bradford Island Visitors Center and no longer used, Bonneville's landfill and surrounding area are getting increasing attention these days.

"The Corps' response to environmental issues around the world has increased in the past two decades," stated Col. Tom O'Donovan, Portland District commander. "Here in the Portland District we're working on several projects to resolve situations we created. Our efforts at Bradford Island demonstrate a real commitment to cleaning up our past actions."

In the late 1990s, the Corps started an investigation of the island's landfill and its potential impacts on groundwater, land and the Columbia River. Aerial

photos showed the boundaries of waste and debris piles. Comparing photos taken over the years and clearing overgrown vegetation helped investigators assess the extent of possible soil and groundwater contamination.

While searching the steep banks of the island on a survey boat for groundwater seepage, investigators noticed a shiny object sticking out of the mud on the shoreline. Investigators then discovered three distinct piles of electrical debris on the river bottom. While the majority of those items were not contaminated, several items did contain oil with high levels of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs.

In 2002, removal experts hauled electrical debris from river, but further sampling determined that PCBs had seeped out of the equipment. River currents had spread the PCBs upstream into the Bonneville Dam forebay, the large pool of water held behind the dam; the in-river contamination was concentrated on the north side of Bradford Island.

PCBs are colorless, odorless chemicals that were widely used in electrical equipment such as transformers and capacitors. Known to be a human carcinogen (cancer causing), their production was banned in 1976. The same properties that made PCBs so useful in industrial applications, such as their non-flammability, mean that PCBs remain in the environment for long periods. They bind to sediment particles, which eventually settle to the river bottom. PCBs can then enter the food chain when filter feeders, such as clams and organisms that live in the sediment, absorb PCBs into their tissues.

"In order to help inform the public about the health issues that might arise from human



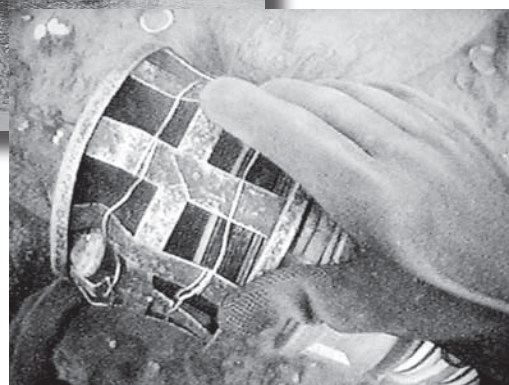
Old electrical equipment was among the debris removed from the Columbia River near Bradford Island.



PROJECT NEWS



Two barges support dive operations near Bonneville Lock and Dam with a dewatering and sediment filtration system.



Corps of Engineers Photos

consumption of fish and shellfish caught between the dam and the mouth of Ruckel Creek, about one mile upstream, we distributed pamphlets in English, Ukrainian, Spanish and Russian that explained the dangers.” stated Mark Dasso, Project Manager.


Because of the potential health risk, the Corps made removing 0.83 acre of river sediment contaminated with the highest levels of PCBs a high priority. This unique operation took more than two years of advance planning and coordination, along with testing, permitting and contracting.

“We considered possible impacts on migrating fish and the flow and temperature of the river water,” Dasso said. “We also designed and tested the underwater sediment removal system to ensure that it would collect the contaminated sediment, not disturb them to be carried away by river currents.”

A technical advisory group comprised of several state and federal agencies and tribal representatives contributed to the development and review of these plans. Along the way, a citizen involvement committee provided guidance to keep the public and local communities informed.

Divers use special underwater equipment, like this 4-inch hose and nozzle, to collect sediment but leave rocks and larger debris.

For six weeks this fall, the complex, over-sized vacuum cleaner sucked up and filtered about 200 cubic yards of river sediment and returned the clean water to the river. This eliminated the contaminated “hot spots” and significantly lowered the risks to aquatic life along the island’s edge.

With immediate risks to the environment and human health reduced, the team continues to investigate the extent of the remaining contamination, both on land and in the river. Based on this investigation, the Corps will determine if there are additional risks to human health and the environment. “If there is a risk, we know that cleaning up anything we find is the right thing to do,” Dasso said. 



US Army Soldiers are treated to a surprise visit from Santa Claus at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq. IRAQI FREEDOM.

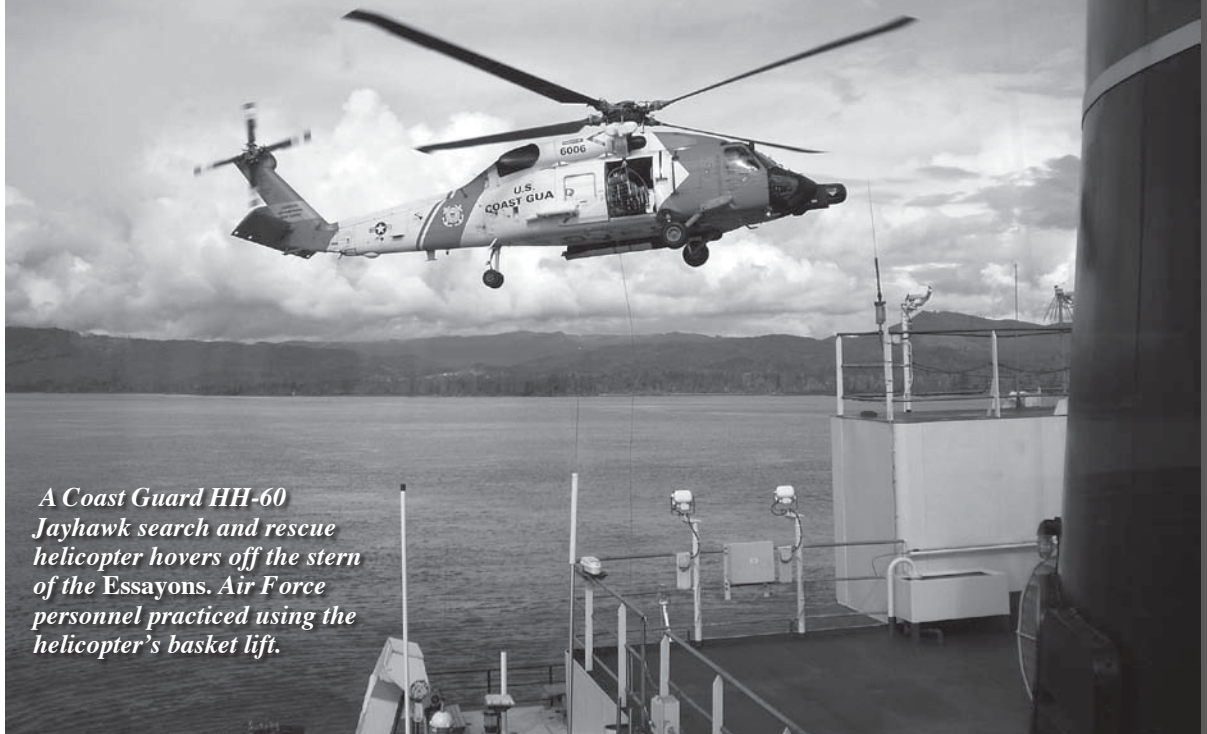


Santa Claus (Sgt Robert Youmans, Advanced Airborne School) lands at Fort Campbell, KY. Dec. 16, 1963.

U.S. Army Photos



Training for emergencies



A Coast Guard HH-60 Jayhawk search and rescue helicopter hovers off the stern of the Essayons. Air Force personnel practiced using the helicopter's basket lift.

By Jennifer Sowell, Public Affairs Office

A regular day at work onboard the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's dredge *Essayons* is interrupted by a radio distress call. Air Force rescue personnel are in the vicinity and require an emergency pick-up. Four inflatable Zodiac rescue boats approach and are soon pulled onboard the *Essayons*, which provides a safe platform for the 10-member rescue crew. Soon after, a Coast Guard HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter arrives on the scene to hoist the rescue team out of the area to further safety.

This was not an actual emergency, but a joint training operation between the U.S. Air Force Reserve 304th Rescue Squadron, the Coast Guard Air Station in Astoria and the Corps. Although rough weather had forced *Essayons* farther up the Columbia River, away from its work near the mouth, the Corps was still able to assist the Air Force Reserve with their shipboard recovery and helicopter rescue training operation.

Under international maritime law, vessel masters are obligated to render assistance to those in distress

at sea. While the dredge crews regularly train for such emergencies, they rarely get the chance to train with rescue personnel from other agencies.

"This was a unique opportunity for an Air Force rescue squadron to train onboard an Army ship with a Coast Guard helicopter rescue team," said Maj. John Dobbin, Air Force Reserve, 304th Rescue Squadron.

"Being a part of the operation allowed everyone to exercise the skills needed to respond in a real emergency," said Larry Hibbs, acting captain of the *Essayons*.


Under the guidance of their instructors, Air Force rescue personnel practiced the approaching a ship, hoisting and conducting helicopter rescue work in a controlled, but real-world scenario.

"We require this training because when we parachute into the ocean with our Zodiacs more than 1,000 miles out to sea, we don't want our guys' first time approaching a large vessel and hoisting aboard

to be in an uncontrolled environment during a real world rescue,” said Dobbin.

According to the Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Shipboard Helicopter Operations, “the shipboard environment demands the ultimate in teamwork.” Teamwork needs practice and joint training events like this one help everyone to prepare for a real emergency rescue operation.

The *Essayons* continued to dredge the river as the 304th Rescue Squadron practiced hoisting personnel off the dredge onto a helicopter hovering overhead. The rescue personnel practiced underway hoisting operations until they all had a chance to perform the procedure with instructors looking on.

Although the exercise occurred in the river and not at sea, the joint training operation provided experience for members of each agency. The exercise allowed Air Force personnel to upgrade their training for certification and was an excellent opportunity for all personnel to train together to better prepare for an actual emergency. 



Corps of Engineers Photos

Members of the Air Force Reserve approach the Essayons in an inflatable boat and prepare to climb aboard.



In Heckhalenfeld, Germany, Pvt. Walter E. Prsybyla, member of the 2nd Infantry Division, addresses Christmas cards to the folks back home, Nov. 30, 1944.

Men of Co “B”, 4th Signal Bn, X US Corps, prepare to decorate the Christmas tree at Bn HQ, Korea, Dec. 11, 1951.



U.S. Army Photos

Christmas in Yong Son, Korea. PFC Glen Zachery 19th Army Postal Unit brings in Christmas mail for processing, Dec. 14-15 1970.



Officers of Headquarters 79th Division, served cocoa, sandwiches, cake, oranges, nuts, grapes, cigars, and cigarettes to enlisted men of Headquarters at Y.M.C.A. Christmas night. Dugny, Meuse, France, Dec. 25, 1918.



Combined Federal Campaign got off to a Running Start at Bonneville Lock and Dam

By Pat Barry, Bonneville Lock and Dam

Sometimes donating to the Combined Federal Campaign can be as easy as “a walk in the park.” That turned out to be true at the 5th Annual Bonneville Lock and Dam CFC kickoff event.

Despite threatening weather, about two dozen Corps employees, some family members and two family dogs turned out for a 5K run or walk from the Eagle Creek Trailhead to the Robins Island picnic shelter at Bonneville. The route included scenic sections along Eagle Creek and the Historic Columbia River Highway, some of which are open only to cyclists and pedestrians. The fall colors added variety to the already pleasant scenery.

Intense rain, often seen in the Columbia River Gorge, splashed the route just prior to the event, but that didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the participants. The rain stopped and everyone walked or ran during a break in the weather. Jewelry Keef, who works in the project office said, “I was amazed that it stopped raining right before we started. That was the best part of the day!”

The event was a good way to promote camaraderie, get some exercise, and take a short break from a busy work day. Some folks chose not to run or walk, but still participated by driving shuttles. Electrical crew working foreman Pete Hamelink described the event as “a great team-building activity.”

As he has in the past, Operations Manager Jim Mahar pledged an amount to CFC based on the number of participants (including the dogs). The winner of the run, however, appears uncertain, since Mahar and Anna Bates, a power plant electrician, each claim the other runner won. We can't help but


think that something was pre-arranged, possibly to maximize income for the CFC? Bates, a long-distance runner, was sure she would have won a longer race. She was overheard saying, “I'd ruin him in a 50-miler!”



Participants in the 2007 CFC 5K Run / Walk at Bonneville Lock and Dam pose in front of the finish line at the Robins Island Picnic Shelter.

Back Row: Kim Ostler, Ron Chandler, Tamra Phelps, John Wheeler, Jim Mahar, SeAnne Veltkamp, Anna Bates, Pat Barry

Front row: Alyssa Ayers with Missy the dog, Jewelry Keef, Rachel Hansen, Mike Ayers with Chewy the dog.

The event also reinforced the importance of sharing our good fortunes with our favorite causes and with others who are in need. This event seems to be well-established and we expect it continue for years to come, so mark your calendars and join us at Bonneville for the 6th annual event next year! 

Editor's Note:

Beginning in 2008, the *Corps'pondent* will become a bi-monthly publication. Look for the January/February issue in early February.